

KISSED BY THE RECTOR.

A Prominent Pastor of Gotham
Forced to Resign by the Church
Authorities.

Three Reputable Women Say the
Reverend Gentleman Was
Too Affectionate.

The Accused Man of 65 Years and For
Eighteen Years in Charge of
St. Mark's.

Charges of gross immorality have been preferred by St. Mark's Protestant Episcopal church against the rector, Rev. Joseph H. Rylance, and he has resigned as shepherd of that flock. Dr. Rylance is a venerable looking man of sixty-five and for eighteen years has had charge of the parish and been looked upon all that time as an earnest and successful worker.

Dr. Rylance is accused of making love to his lady parishioners without much regard to age. One woman swears he kissed her and wanted her to go to Europe with him, another says the doctor kissed her and seized her by the ankle. Nicholas Quackenbos, the counsel for the vestry, is in turn accused by Dr. Rylance of entering into a conspiracy with others to ruin the doctor, who has brought suit for damages claimed to have been sustained through circulation of the charges by Mr. Quackenbos.

In his complaint and summons Dr. Rylance says that he has been for thirty-seven years and still is a duly ordained member of the Protestant Episcopal church of the United States in good standing and credit, and that he has been grossly libeled by Mr. Quackenbos, who in August wrote to Nathan Bozeman, M. D., saying:

Dr. Rylance is charged with repeated acts of the grossest immorality. Before I would believe a syllable of it I demanded the evidence and I am deeply grieved to say that the proof is overwhelming. I have been retained as counsel for the vestry, and a peremptory demand has been sent to him requiring his immediate and unconditional resignation of the rectorship. Failing to comply with this demand, charges and specifications will be prepared against him and placed in the hands of the bishop, in accordance with the canons, and he will be deposed from the ministry. Since his affiliation with the infidels of the Nineteenth Century club a few years ago his course has been rapidly downward. For the sake of the church at large, I am doing all in my power to prevent the scandal which a public trial will occasion, and therefore we have given him the opportunity to resign, but failing in that, he will surely be publicly arraigned.

Dr. Rylance then declares: "That said statements are false, scandalous and defamatory; that he has not been guilty of immorality of any kind; that the proof thereof is not overwhelming, but if there is any alleged proof it is manufactured; that he has not become an infidel, but remains a believer in the religion of Christ; that by means of said libel this plaintiff has been injured in his reputation and in his good name and credit as such minister aforesaid," wherefore he asks such damages as the court may think proper to award. His attorney is Mr. Leavitt.

In his reply to the rector's summons, Mr. Quackenbos admits that he wrote the letter to Dr. Bozeman, but affirms that its allegations are all only too true. He denies, however, that he meant that Dr. Rylance had accomplished his immoral purpose with women. He then alleges upon information and belief that Dr. Rylance, "while he was the rector of St. Mark's church, as aforesaid, committed acts upon and spoke words and made proposals to numerous females, which acts, words and proposals were grossly immoral, improper and unbecoming a clergyman," and that notwithstanding the rector has since resigned, charges will be preferred against him in an ecclesiastical court with a view to having him deposed from the ministry.

"Mr. Quackenbos is an old and well known member of the bar, and comes from a Knickerbocker family whose members have attended St. Mark's since the time of Peter Stuyvesant. He was once district attorney of New York, but is no longer in very active practice. He is wealthy and is retiring from legal business. He means to fight, now that he has been assailed, and makes the following statement for publication:

"I want to premise by saying that no one can more deeply deplore the publicity of this scandal than myself. I don't wish to be misunderstood when I say that I regret that the affair has been made public; I regret for the sake of the old parish of St. Mark's and for the sake of Christianity—not for the sake of Joseph H. Rylance, whom I heartily despise. This is a contest in which purity and chastity are arrayed in defense against lechery and ministerial hypocrisy. I am so old fashioned as to call sin sin. The names of the vestry of St. Mark's parish are in themselves sufficient to refute Mr. Leavitt's gratuitous slur upon them. They are Christian gentlemen of the highest personal character, and if New York can boast more honored names I would like to know it.

"Now, the whole matter is very simple. Written statements emanating from ladies of the highest respectability were read to members of the vestry at an informal meeting on July 17 last. They made definite charges of immorality against Dr. Rylance. There was every reason to believe these charges to be true. It was quite apparent that the usefulness of Dr. Rylance as the rector of St. Mark's was, therefore, at an end. Dr. Rylance was then in Europe. He was apprised of the fact that general charges of immorality had been made against him by members of his congregation. Mr. King was the member of the vestry deputed by the others for the purpose of writing to Dr. Rylance informing him of the charges. In this letter the doctor's resignation was demanded in the name of the vestry. This demand was at once complied with by Dr. Rylance, and it was unanimously accepted at a vestry meeting in September.

"Discovering later that his prompt compliance with our request for withdrawal was construed into an admission of guilt—for such, indeed, it was—Dr. Rylance then attempted to withdraw his resignation. His next step was to bring suit against Mr. King and the counsel to the vestry. I am not a card player myself, but I believe there is a game known as 'bluff.' The player, however, is not always successful. I know of no more striking case of bluff than Dr. Rylance's suit.

"The facts on which I found my answer are contained in these affidavits and statements," continued Mr. Quackenbos, handing the reporter a package of legal looking papers. "One of these statements, as you will see when you read it, is made by a lovely young lady just budding into womanhood, whom Dr. Rylance has known since she was a little child. I have only to say that had she been my daughter Dr. Rylance would not be walking the streets of New York to-day."

referred to by Mr. Quackenbos when he intimated that if she had been his daughter he would have taken the law into his own hands and punished Dr. Rylance.

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